

District Attorney Outsourcing of Forensic Testing



NORTH CAROLINA

Conference of District Attorneys

State Crime Lab: Backlog Issues

- Toxicology
 - 18 – 24 months
- Controlled substances
 - 12 to 18 months
- DNA
 - 24 months
- Other Disciplines
 - 12 months minimum

State Crime Lab: Backlog Effects

- Superior Court Case age (5 years)
 - Misdemeanors – 40% increase
 - Felonies – 30% increase
- Judicial Response
 - Continuances denied
 - Many Cases dismissed

District Level Response: Locally Funded Labs

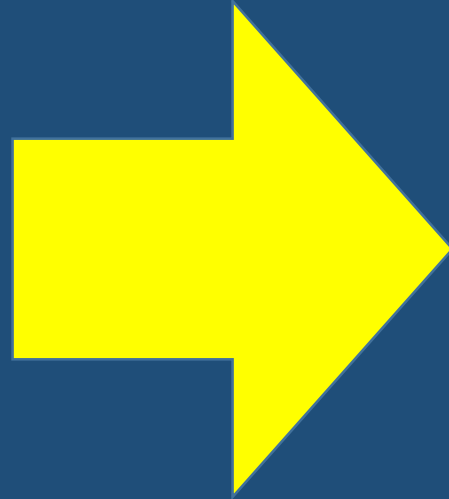
- Local Lab Development: limited services
 - Wake
 - Alcohol Toxicology – Less than 30 days
 - Drug Toxicology – 4-6 months
 - Drug Analysis – Less than 30 days
 - Latent Fingerprint – one week to 12 months
 - Mecklenburg
 - Drug Analysis – 2-4 months
 - DNA Analysis – 1-6 months
 - Latent Fingerprint – 2-3 months
 - New Hanover
 - Alcohol Toxicology only
 - Iredell
 - Alcohol Toxicology – 30 days
 - Drug Analysis – 60 days
 - 3 counties in development process

District Level Response: Hospital Toxicology Program

- **Blood Toxicology Only**
- **7 hospital contracts**
 - **Pitt, Randolph, Catawba, Gaston, McDowell, Henderson, Haywood**
- **3 active labs**
- **306 tests - \$17,755**

Continuing Problems

- Blood Drug
- Narcotics
- DNA



- More complex testing
- Hospitals not equipped to conduct testing
- Out of state lab = out of state witnesses

Lab Working Group

- Lab personnel & prosecution staff
- Improved communication
- Improved automation with tracking
- Establish cleanup weeks
- Coordinated / cooperative scheduling